

REMARKS

Applicant cancels claim 10; therefore, claims 1-9 and 11-14 are all the claims pending in the application.

Applicant amends claim 9 to delete an alternative recitation of the degassing barrier layer being a chemically deposited nickel layer, and cancels claim 10 accordingly. Applicant notes that this amendment merely deletes one of the alternatives recited in claim 9, and does not in any way narrow the scope of coverage afforded by the remaining alternatives as recited in claim 9.

The Examiner rejects claims 9, 10 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 2000-315645 to NIKON CORP (NIKON). The Examiner indicates that claims 1-8, 11, 13 and 14 are allowed.

With regard to the allowed claims, Applicant has reviewed the Examiner's "statement of reasons for the indication of the allowable subject matter", and respectfully submits that the scope of each of the allowed claims is defined by the express language of that claim.

With regard to the Examiner's rejection of independent claim 9 and its dependent claim 12, Applicant respectfully submits that NIKON does not disclose or suggest an optical beam guidance system comprising a unique combination of features, including *inter alia*, a degassing barrier layer that at least partially coats a surface of the frame neighboring the beam guidance space, wherein the degassing barrier layer is a silver, gold, or tantalum layer (see claim 9).

Therefore, Applicant's claims 9 and 12 are not anticipated by NIKON at least for this reason.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Appln No. 10/079,580

Atty Dkt No. Q68199

Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Stan Torgovitsky
Registration No. 43,958

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: July 7, 2004